

EMIGRATION
FROM
THE BRITISH ISLANDS,
CONSIDERED WITH REGARD
TO ITS
BEARING AND INFLUENCE
UPON THE
INTERESTS AND PROSPERITY
OF
GREAT BRITAIN.

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EMIGRATION.

THE extraordinary and unlooked-for movement that has taken place in America during the past year, the disruption of the supposed everlasting Union, the fierce civil war that it has produced with all its attendant evils, including the creation throughout the States of numerous and most extensive armaments both by sea and land, attended by an almost entire suspension of all industrial pursuits excepting those called into activity by this state of warfare : these, coupled with the entire and rapid change they have effected in the minds, feelings and pursuits of the hitherto peace-loving, industrious, go-a-head people of the States, are all subjects to excite wonder and astonishment throughout the world.

These passing events, that prey so heavily on the commerce and industry of almost every country, are felt to do so with peculiar severity on England, and are, no doubt, the cause of deep thought and anxious consideration throughout the kingdom. While others are weighing their pressure on the trading and manufacturing interests, the writer will venture a few remarks upon their bearing upon emigration from Great Britain.

Emigration from these islands may be said to have commenced immediately after the termination

of the long war with Napoleon I., and has ever since continued to flow in uninterrupted streams to various parts of the globe.

During those years, upwards of five millions of persons have quitted these shores to seek in other lands, the home, elbow-room and employment they were unable to procure in this over-crowded country.

As far as England was concerned, the overflow has been allowed to take its own course, it flowed where it listed, unshackled by restrictions, unaided by the rich and uncared for by any.

Of these five millions, three passed over to the States of America, one million to British America, and the remainder to Australia, the Cape of Good Hope and elsewhere.

How is England now affected, in her political and commercial relations by this outpouring of her children, as respects the various countries to which they have passed?

It may be asserted, without exaggeration, that the three millions which have gone over to the States have now been multiplied by natural increase into double that number or more, and that, in fact, they compose fully one-third of the population of the Northern States.

What is the position in which these people are now placed? and what are their feelings towards their fatherland at this momentous period?

A visit to Washington and its surrounding camps will soon convince the enquirer, that a very large

proportion of the armies that occupy these camps consists of men who were themselves emigrants from Britain, or of their immediate children, and he will also learn, from the conversation he will listen to, that hatred to England is only second to the detestation he will hear expressed in every possible form of insulting language towards their brethren on the other side of the Potomac.

If he then crosses the St. Lawrence into Canada, how different the language that will greet his ears. Men of the same class and of the same race, many of whom, perhaps, quitted their native land, aye, possibly, the same village or the same house and by the same ship, with the men encountered at Washington will meet him there, and these men he will find, shouting loyalty to their beloved Queen, devotion to the country that gave them birth, and hatred and war to the knife with the Northern States.

Such is man! altogether the child of circumstances, ruled and governed by passing events, and easily led, for good or evil, by the popular voice or by the master mind.

Ought not this state of affairs in America, in which England's emigrants are playing so prominent and important a part, read a useful lesson to the people of England upon the unwise indifference they have hitherto manifested with regard to the course taken by her emigration? and does not that lesson apply more particularly to those who, along with their possession of political power, wealth and

station, have also the duty imposed on them of the watchful guardianship of their country's interests, commercial as well as political? and may not this question of emigration be fairly placed amongst the category of neglected duties, when it is seen that England's avowed and bitterest enemy has been largely strengthened and invigorated by it, while her own possessions have been left to languish, or to advance at a snail's pace for the want of it?

If, then, it is the case that, in the course taken by emigration from England, by far the greater part of it has gone to increase the powers of her openly avowed enemy, it may fairly be assumed that, in its political bearings, her losses far outnumber any benefits she may have derived from it. It remains now to enquire whether any counter-balance is to be found in its effects upon England's commerce.

It is patent to all, that very much of England's prosperity depends upon having extensive, remunerative markets for her ever-increasing manufactured products; and that constant and strenuous efforts are made to create and extend those markets. It is also well understood by commercial men that Britain's own foreign possessions supply many of her best markets, and that in proportion to numbers they far surpass all others; or, in other words, each person located in a British colony is a customer to a much greater amount than those in foreign States. This the writer will endeavour to elucidate;

but his object being to show its bearing upon emigration, and *its* power of creating markets, he will confine himself to a parallel between that which has passed over to the American States and that to the Australian colonies.

On reference to American official tables, to be met with in the "Boston American Almanac" for 1861, it will be seen that the States imported from England, during the year 1859, goods to the value of £25,156,000; and from the same source it may be learned that the free population of the States in that year was about 26,500,000.

If the value of these imports be divided by the population, it gives for each person just 19s.; consequently each immigrant from England, and their increase, were customers to England in that year for the sum of nineteen shillings.

In 1860,—which was far from being a prosperous commercial year in those quarters, for the average of the three former years shows the imports to have been in excess of twelve millions,—the seven Australian colonies imported from England, goods to the value of £9,707,000, and in that year their united population was about 1,150,000.

The imports divided by the population show that each individual was a customer to the value of £8.7s, so that, in fact, each emigrant to Australia was worth to England, in that respect, as much as nine who had gone to America.

This is a light in which it is probable the people

of England have not heretofore regarded this important subject, or they would hardly have treated it with the great indifference with which it has always been passed over, and it is from that state of indifference that it is highly important they should arouse themselves, particularly at this time, when their commerce and prosperity are so fearfully endangered by this American revolution.

To place this question in a stronger point of view, let it be supposed that one million of the three that have emigrated to the States had gone to Australia during the last twenty years, during which these Colonies have been well prepared to receive them, and would have gladly welcomed them.

It may be assumed that they would by this time have increased to at least a million and a half, and would be customers to England for at least £10,000,000 worth of her merchandize. It would be rather difficult to estimate their value to England in that respect where they are at present.

This is a clear case, and it is beyond dispute, that the best interests of England must always be materially affected by the course taken by the flow of emigration from her superabundant population; it is like the overflowing of a mighty river, which, if directed through proper channels to irrigate dry and thirsty fields, assures to their proprietors plenty and prosperity. If, on the other hand, the waters are allowed to wander unheeded over other lands, they produce little benefit, and eventually stagnate into pestilential swamps, and fever-producing marshes.

If these evils and unprofitable results have attended the course hitherto taken by England's emigration, ought they not to arouse public attention to the future. No one will imagine that emigration can be prevented, and no one will venture to propose any coercive interference with it, but there is no reason why persuasive measures, measures to forward the interests, and suit the convenience of intending emigrants should not be used, and if used there need be no doubt of their success.

Hitherto England has not come forward to bear any portion of the expense of emigration; the great mass of emigrants have been left to provide the cost entirely from their own resources, and consequently, as a matter of necessity, they have gone to that country to which a passage was attainable at the smallest cost.

To obtain emigrants of the working classes for the Australian colonies, the rule has been, that they (the colonies) should pay all the cost, consequently a narrow limit was placed upon emigration of that class, measured by the ability of the colonists to spare funds for that purpose. And all this time, England, that undoubtedly had quite as great an interest in the movement as the other parties, quietly looked on, did nothing, and said nothing.

Now as these three parties are mutually benefited by emigration; first, the emigrant, who escapes from the country that has neither room nor employment for him, to one that will reward his industry with wealth and independence; secondly, the country

that receives him, and to whose advancement his labour is necessary; and lastly, the country he leaves, where his exertions were not required, and which is not only relieved by his absence, but is materially served by him in her commerce, both by the raw material he supplies her with, and by his increased consumption of her manufactures, owing to his improved circumstances. Common sense and justice would tell us that as all three receive benefit from the operation, all ought to contribute to the expense.

With respect to the first, *he* may fairly say, "I can get to America for £4. or £5, I therefore cannot be expected to pay a larger sum for a passage to Australia." His plea admitted, it would rest then between England and her colony to provide the remainder, if they desire to have him, and as the partition of it between these two parties will hardly admit of fractional differences, it may be fairly divided between them in equal portions.

The superior value of colonial settlers over the inhabitants of other countries, as customers, has been already pointed out as regards the American States. This fact will be further established by a reference to England's commercial dealings with her near neighbour, France. Notwithstanding the great exertions that have been made of late years, to facilitate intercourse and increase trade between those nations, England's exports to France, with her 36 millions of people have not as yet reached in value those to Australia with her little more than

one million, and the same results would be apparent if the comparison was made with other nations also.

Many persons, who have given but little thought to this question of emigration, are ready to exclaim, England does not want emigration, and would be better without it, for its certain tendency is to enhance the price of labour. This would be to take a very narrow view of it, and a very little consideration will expose its fallacy, for the remuneration to be paid to the artificer depends much more upon the price that will be obtained for the article produced, than upon the abundance or scarcity of hands to be found capable of producing it. The latter will of course have some influence, but this would be but a poor argument against emigration. If it *had availed*, and the five millions who emigrated *had remained* in England to stock the labour market, instead of having, in other countries, become producers of raw material for the English manufacturer, as well as capital customers for his goods, it will hardly be said, even by our objector, that England would have been the better for it. If, then, emigration is both necessary and unavoidable, why should not England exert her energies to render it as beneficial to herself as possible.

England has been raised to the exalted position she occupies amongst the nations, mainly by her trade and manufactures. To maintain that position she must ever struggle onwards, for to relax would be to recede.

The battle of life with States as with individuals, is an increasing effort to climb a steep and rugged mountain ; some proceed leisurely, and if in their upward progress they encounter some level spot or secluded valley they are content to linger there, permitting the more energetic and ambitious to pass them by. England ranks amongst the latter ; and she has already attained to a towering height. To support her position, she must be ever watchful, put forth all her energies and firmly grasp whatever may enable her to maintain her footing. When she looks around, to discover from whence comes her best support, her eye should rest upon the saplings she has planted in her rear, and she will perceive, that if she will nourish them with the pabulum best calculated to promote their growth and increase their strength, and it is that which *she* casts off for its over-abundance ; namely, the blood and bones and thews and sinews of her superabundant population ; they will rapidly attain to magnitude and power, upon which she may lean with confidence, sheltered by their foliage, nurtured by their fruits, and assisted by their strength. Then her old age will be more vigorous than was her youth, and her hour of decrepitude or decay will be postponed to a period far beyond the power of human vision to foresee.

Heretofore a strong prejudice was entertained against Australia as a place of settlement, founded on the absence of large navigable rivers, such as might have been looked for in a country of its great

extent; this prejudice was unhappily fostered and maintained by a fine spun theory, founded upon that fact, which was adopted and promulgated in England.

It was assumed that, because the number of rivers communicating with the ocean are few, and generally small, the interior of the great Island, or more properly speaking, Continent, must be a continuous desert of sandy arid plains and briny lakes and swamps. Happily for the future of that country, recent explorings through its very centre have proved the fallacy of that theory, and have established the fact, by the view of many witnesses, that the quantity of desert is small indeed in proportion to the well grassed and fairly watered country that has been traversed, and as it is upon her widely spread,—almost interminable pastures and favourable climate for pastoral pursuits that Australia founds her superiority over less favoured lands, the clearing away of this dark and murky cloud has been an occurrence of vast importance.

This fact of the non-existence of navigable waters throughout the greater portion of the vast Australian continent, afforded,—forty, or even thirty years ago,—a reasonable,—indeed it may be said,—a conclusive argument against its capabilities for ever becoming extensively occupied by a numerous population; but the development of the railway system of communication which is so rapidly extending its benefits to all parts of the world, has already gained

a footing in that country, and—most assuredly,—its aid will be invoked to extend internal intercourse, quite as often as it may be required, and as increasing population will render it necessary.

The result of a very few years' experience of this wonderful discovery, — for such it may well be termed,—both in Europe and America, has been to urge its substitution for intercourse by water. The Rhine, which for years past was the great highway for many nations, now finds her usefulness superseded by the rail. The same may be said of the Rhone and other rivers of France, and even the Danube is no longer the only highway from the west to the capital of Hungary.

In America the same is to be found, both in the States and Canada. The mighty Hudson, with her incomparable steamers, unequalled for speed and for princely accommodation, finds her monopoly wrested from her by the saucy rail that has established itself upon her very borders. That noble work of man, the Erie canal, has also been obliged to surrender more than half its business to its competing railway, and even the mighty Mississippi has many iron opponents.

Canada has not been unmindful of the superior facilities afforded by the rail, and even within sight of her navigable waters for the greater part of their course, her Grand Trunk and Great Western, now from west to east of her southern frontier, absorb the greatest portion of her internal traffic. Can,

then, the assertion be maintained, that Australia is incapable of becoming great or populous, because of a deficiency of navigable waters.

Compare that country with the vast forest-clad continent of North America. There little or no land is available for the use of man until it is denuded of its heavy covering of enormous trees, and even where this encumbrance does not exist, as on the western prairies, the long and frost bound winter, deep clad in snow, forbids the increase of flocks and herds beyond the powers of their owners to provide artificial food for them during these dreary months. These are points of difference between the two countries well worth consideration by intending emigrants. But it is not only in their fitness for pastoral pursuits, that the superiority of the open lands and mild climate of Australia are to be traced, for they are both equally favourable to agriculture and horticulture.

The farmer's first care on entering upon his purchase of land, fresh from the hand of nature, is to set his plough at work, turn it over, and let it lie fallow to destroy the vegetation with which it was covered. The next process is to harrow in the seed, and when harvest time arrives, he finds himself rewarded by a crop that probably indemnifies him for all his previous outlay, on the purchase, fencing and cultivation.

It has also been shown by experience that the fruits and vegetables of almost every climate and

country prosper and flourish to perfection on these lands, and already, such has been the success of vine-culture, large quantities of excellent wine are made for home consumption, while sanguine expectations are entertained that it may before long become an important article for export to England, if means can be discovered for preparing it to withstand the voyage across the torrid zone.

Enough said about the productiveness of the surface of the Australian lands. Now a word for that which is to be found beneath the surface.

The gold mines do not require a reporter, for they have already reported themselves to the uttermost ends of the earth, by the dispersion of their precious produce to the value of more than £121,000,000.

Australian copper mines are also somewhat known beyond her own boundaries, still it may be said, that but *little* is as yet known of their great extent and exceeding richness, for each succeeding year brings forth some new discovery, apparently more extensive than those which preceded it. However, if all those already known, were to be efficiently worked, all the mining population of Cornwall would be utterly insufficient for the purpose.

Lead with silver, tin, zinc, and other minerals are met with in many places, though none of them, except the first, have been as yet mined upon, and as to iron, it is to be met with almost every where; however, the day is far distant when Australians

will find it to their advantage to make iron ; not while it can be supplied from England at its present low value. Still, the minerals of Australia are always an important reserve for the future, from whence incalculable wealth may be drawn, when population shall have arrived at dimensions that will admit of their being extensively and vigorously worked.

If all these many and great advantages are to be found in England's own possessions, and that to obtain them she has only to send her surplus population ; and if it is also certain, that, if she does not thus employ it, that surplus will most assuredly pass over to her declared enemy, surely there should not be any hesitation about it. If she is constrained to expend half a million, or even more, in each year, to secure for her eastern Colonies 100,000 out of the 150,000—which is about the average of the annual emigration,—what should it matter to her ! True, it will bring no return in the shape of dividends, or calculated interest on capital, but like money invested in sheep in these Colonies, the principal will be ever growing and the profits ever increasing.

THE END.